DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 348 462 UD 028 835

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TITLE The District's View of Chapter 1 Schoolwide Projects in Philadelphia.
INSTITUTION Philadelphia School District, Pa.
PUB DATE Apr 92
NOTE 5p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Francisco, CA, April 20-24, 1992). Paper adapted from "Chapter 1 Evaluation: Progress, Problems, and Possibilities" (Constance E. Clayton).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Compensatory Education; Disadvantaged Youth; *Economically Disadvantaged; Educational Change; Elementary Secondary Education; Federal Programs; *Program Effectiveness; Public Schools; *Remedial Programs; *School Based Management; School Districts; *Urban Schools; Urban Youth
IDENTIFIERS Hawkins Stafford Act 1988; *Philadelphia School District PA

ABSTRACT

This report describes and evaluates Chapter 1 schoolwide programs in the School District of Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) since the reauthorization of that legislation in 1988. A brief description of the history and philosophy of Chapter 1 legislation and of the Philadelphia district opens the document. This district serves a population that is 77 percent minority and has a 65.4 percent Chapter 1 elementary poverty percentage. A short description of the 1988 reauthorization details changes in and goals of the program. A report on the experience in Philadelphia describes the following: (1) reorganization of the Chapter 1 programs in 1988 to conform to the reauthorization that involved the establishment of the Schoolwide Projects with 103 schools eligible to participate; (2) principles of shared decision-making and school-based management at the core of the reorganization; (3) many schools have opted for remedial programs providing ongoing support in the regular program; (4) some schools have had success with innovative programs; (5) all schools have instruction-based support; (6) schools have school-specific staff development; (7) the program involves ongoing accountability efforts; and (8) there has been improved student achievement over the past 3 years. Keys to success in Philadelphia are described as empowerment of staff and ownership of programs, with local control energizing the staff and principals. Suggestions for the 1993 reauthorization are offered. (JB)

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## PRESENTATION TO AERA

## APRIL 22, 1992

## SCHOOLWIDE PROJECTS

This presentation is adapted from an article in the Winter, 1991, issue of *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* entitled "Chapter 1 Evaluation: Progress, Problems, and Possibilities" by Constance E. Clayton, Superintendent of Philadelphia Schools.

For well over a century, a commitment to educational opportunity through public schooling for all children has been a basic premise of our American democracy. During the 1960's, that premise was strengthened by the articulation of the concept of compensatory education: that schools can and should compensate for the effects of poverty on children's lives, providing them with the extra support needed to improve their life chances. Since 1965, this commitment to compensatory education has been expressed in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Chapter 1 Program, funded for 1991-1992 at over six billion dollars and serving approximately five million students.

The School District of Philadelphia is the fifth largest school district in the nation serving 192,000 students. It receives 86.3 million dollars in Chapter 1 funds which provide for services to over 62,000 students in 161 public and 51 nonpublic schools. The student population is:

| | |
|---|---|
| African-American | 63% |
| Asian | 4% |
| Hispanic | 10% |
| White | 23% |
| Number of Schools | 258 |
| Teachers | 12,000 |
| Total Staff | 25,000 |
| Chapter 1 Elementary Poverty Percentage | 65.4% |
| Operating Budget | $1.2 billion |
| Categorical | $180 million |
| Food Services | |
| Breakfast daily | 20,000 |
| Breakfast annually | 3,300,000 |
| Lunch daily | 95,300 |
| Lunch annually | 21,000,000 |
| 144 schools on Universal Free Lunch Program | |

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A key concern of the Chapter 1 legislation is ensuring that the services provided to students are producing results, that ineffective practices are replaced with more promising ones, and that the money spent on the program is a sound investment. These concerns are clearly ones that local districts and schools share. The 1988 reauthorization of the Chapter 1 legislation introduced several significant

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changes in both program and evaluation features. Three years later, our experience in the School District of Philadelphia is that most of these changes have been highly beneficial to our Chapter 1 students and schools.

## THE 1988 REAUTHORIZATION

Programmatically, the legislation is founded on the premises of the effective schools model, which holds that poor and minority children can succeed in school if provided with the right conditions, including high expectations, goal-setting with close monitoring of student progress, an emphasis on learning, an orderly environment, and parental involvement (Stringfield, Billig, & Davis, 1991). The legislation also calls for an emphasis on advanced skills as well as the basics, and on support of student success in the regular program. Reflecting the recent literature on school change, it emphasizes the local school as the unit of improvement.

## THE PHILADELPHIA EXPERIENCE

The policy changes made in the 1988 reauthorization were attempts to promote improvement of programs at the school and student level. During the 1987-1988 school year, the School District of Philadelphia conducted a major review of its Chapter 1 Program, resulting in a restructuring designed to take full advantage of the legislative changes. The principles underlying the restructuring were alignment with the regular educational program, prevention of failure, early intervention, school-based program design, and school- and student-centered monitoring of progress. The School District established Schoolwide Projects, schools with poverty concentrations of 75% or more, designating 37 sites for the 1988-1989 school year and expanding yearly. For the 1991-1992 school year, 103 of our Chapter 1 sites have Schoolwide status. The annual expansion has occurred because the Schoolwides have shown very positive results, both in terms of "hard" indicators such as test scores and marks, and in terms of the satisfaction expressed by local school staffs and communities at having the flexibility to design a program tailored especially for the needs of their own students.

From the outset, the principles basic to the restructuring efforts currently identified as Shared Decision-Making/School Based Management have been at the core of the Schoolwide Projects philosophy and implementation. Management of Chapter 1 resources has been transferred to the school site, and decisions regarding school improvement planning and program implementation have been made by participatory decision-making processes which include both staff and parents. Meetings of staff, parents, School Improvement Committees, grade groups, and leadership teams have been part of the ongoing process of developing, implementing, and monitoring the school plan.

Schools were given a block grant and permitted to restructure the Chapter 1 program to respond to local needs. Staff in the schools that were funded by Chapter 1

were asked to change roles (i.e. reading teacher to classroom teacher in a reduced class size model) or could request a transfer to another school. Zero based budgeting provided school staff the opportunity to develop designs which were responsive to their needs.

In general, the schools have changed from pull-out remedial programs to programs providing ongoing support in the regular program, especially in the early grades. Many sites have purchased additional teachers to lower the size of the groups or to create special alternative classes for students who are not experiencing success. Some have created full-day kindergartens. All have used funds for a variety of parent outreach and involvement programs which support instruction in the school. The schools monitor student progress on an ongoing basis, shifting resources in response to the needs indicated by the data.

Several schools have shown great success with particularly innovative programs. One has created an eleven-month program, extending the regular school year through the end of July and using the extra time to ensure that higher proportions of students master the curriculum and qualify for promotion. This permitted the school to pace instruction so that students were given 11 months to master the regular 10 month curriculum. Another has implemented the nationally known Success For All model (Madden, Slavin, Karweit, Dolan, & Wasik, 1991), where students in the early grades are given one-to-one tutoring on a daily basis to promote success. This school has a large LEP population. Several schools have emphasized thinking skills across the curriculum, and two of these were cited this year by the Secretary of Education as exemplary compensatory education programs.

Each Schoolwide Projects site receives one to two days of service per week from a region-based Instrutional Support Teacher, who works with the principal, the program support teacher, and the staff in support of school improvement and enhancement of classroom instruction. Each site also receives service from other members of the region's Instructional Resource Team. This service is coordinated at regular school-based team meetings, attended by the school leadership team and the Instructional Support Teacher.

Each school designs a school-specific staff development program which supports the goals of its School Improvement Plan/Schoolwide Projects Proposal, and also has the opportunity to particpate in regional and central workshops on instructional strategies with demonstrated effectiveness. Staff development is implemented with the assistance of a school-based Program Support Teacher, the region-based Instructional Support Teacher, and Instructional Resource Team members. Funds are provided from central, regional, and school resources.

Within the Schoolwides and across the rest of the Chapter 1 Program, the School District of Philadelphia is intent on accountability for outcomes and on ongoing improvement of program. The district has built upon the school improvement process since 1985. The experience of the last three years is that

schools are feeling accountable for their Chapter 1 programs, taking their goals seriously, and making data-based program decisions.

The federal government, which makes Schoolwide Projects possible, also builds in accountability; it sets standards for the achievement of Chapter One eligible studentds and stipulates that, if the sites do not meet those standards after three years, they may not continue as Schoolwides. That First Cohort of 37 Schoolwide Project schools completed their third year in June of 1991. An independent analysis of their achievement gains over the previous three years by Research for Better Schools was reviewed and approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. This study confirmed that all 37 met the federal achievement requirements for continuation as Schoolwide Projects. Three of those schools, however, no longer meet the economic eligibility requirements.

The School District then conducted an expanded review of the progress over the past three years of the 37 sites. Despite increasing levels of poverty in most of the student populations, this analysis revealed that:

- The proportion of low-scoring students was reduced.
- The standardized test scores of the students have increased.
- Student marks have increased across the subject areas.

The keys to success in Philadelphia's schoolwide project are empowerment of staff and ownership of the program. Local control has energized the staff and principal and raised morale.

As we look at the reauthorization in 1993, changes that should be incorporated are:

1. Reducing the level for school eligibility to either 65% or to permit school districts that have a poverty concentration of 50% or more to declare all schools eligible for schoolwide project status.
2. To look at multiple indicators rather than standardized test scores as the basis for continuation after three years.
3. If a school does not meet the evaluation standard, they should be permitted to use a transitional year, or to use the school improvement process as a method of restructuring the program.